The Builder.

No. CXLIII.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1845.

ON Thursday last our gracious Queen and his Royal Highness Prince Albert opened formally the new Hall and Library at Lincoln's Inn,—a structure remarkable alike for the rapidity with which it has been raised and its great merits as an architectural achievement. It is unquestionably one of the most successful buildings of our day, whether regarded as a whole for the general arrangement and grouping of the masses, or in detail for elegance of parts, variety, and completeness, and will hand down with honour to distant times the name of its architect,—Mr. Philip Hardwick. In the present wavering state of public opinion as to what style should be adopted in buildings not ecclesiastical, this successful adaptation of late Tudor architecture (the style of the period which immediately preceded the decline of pointed architecture, when the arch was flattened, and the horizontal line was acquiring precedence over the perpendicular), will doubtless tend to increase the use of it.

In the buildings of this period, and indeed of the pointed style generally, the elevations grew out of the plan and was subservient to it, and this was arranged with a view to convenience and the purposes of the building. A door was placed where a door was wanted, a turret where a turret was required (always, however, with judgment), and each was left to produce what effect it might in appearance. In classical architecture the positive sacrifice of convenient arrangement to regularity in elevation is often unavoidable; in Gothic architecture the distinctive merit of the style is the growth of perfect adaptation to convenience. The earliest revivers of Gothic architure arranged their Gothic much the same as their Italian buildings, where "grove nods at grove," each alley has its brother, and the result was unsatisfactory. Their successors in the present day seem to have made a discovery that *irregularity* should be the main characteristic. Their aim is to make no two things alike; to set a steeple in any place rather than the middle of the west front, in fact,—in direct reverse of the other mistake,—and actually to make convenience subservient to *irregularity*.

To see errors is easy, to describe what Gothic architecture should be is difficult. Instruction in the practice of art has never yet been embodied in words; excellence is to be felt; the road to it hard to demonstrate. The whole theory of the causes of the emotion of beauty, more difficult of analysis in architecture than in any other branch of art, is involved in the question. Thus far, however, we may venture to affirm, that in every division and subdivision of the structure, convenience is made the framework, out of which every form is created without attempt at concealment; that, consistent with the attainment of this, there is, in the management of masses, a leaning towards regularity, whilst, in subdivisions and details, there is a very striking love of variety. Regularity, co-existent with the attained object of the building, we find in the plan of the cathedral; irregularity, the result of a similar aim at convenience, in the addition of the cloisters and chapter-house, and often in the position of buttresses and doors; ornament was the application to this framework.

Now, we are most pleased with the building under notice, because it evinces almost the first successful application of the principles which we have endeavoured, we fear inadequately, to indicate; it displays a perfect acquaintance with the principles of Gothic design, with those principles, which, being founded on truth, are destined to last many centuries.

Our purpose is to give a general description of it. The first stone of the structure was laid in April, 1843. It consists of a hall, arranged north and south, and a library, arranged east and west; the two buildings being connected by a vestibule of a lower elevation. It is erected in the gardens of the inn, and has, perhaps, greater advantages of site than any other building in the metropolis. Externally, the edifice is in two stories, the principal rooms being raised considerably above the ground level, and reached by long flights of steps from the exterior. The materials employed are red bricks, intersected with black brick in patterns, and stone dressings. The stone employed externally, is from Messrs. Peto and Grissell's quarries at Anston; for the interior, Caen stone is used. The south end, towards New-square, exhibits a lofty gable, flanked on each side by a square tower. These towers project slightly at this end, though in a greater degree at the sides of the building. They have small square-headed windows, three one above another, and are surmounted by battlements. Beneath the battlements are shields placed in square compartments. The angles have stone coins; and here, as well as throughout the building, we may notice, that the brick and stone are combined with the greatest propriety, decoratively and constructively, the irregularity not appearing too studied. Between the two towers is the great window of the hall. This is of seven lights, transomed; the head, which has a four-centred arch, being filled with very beautiful tracery. The design appears to be original; and the small quatrefoils, which are introduced, add much to the effect of the whole, which is a little heightened by the red curtain that hangs on the inside. Beneath this window are three small openings, to light the basement.

On the apex of the gable is a canopied pinnacle, containing a statue of the Queen. This pinnacle has some very beautiful parts, yet from its peculiar plan, which appears to be triangular, and from the projection of its gurgoyles, in some points of view, seems to be broken and out of the perpendicular. There is a small window, above the large one, in the gable. In this elevation, the two stacks of chimneys, which rise in the angle, formed by the towers and flanks of the building, have a very beautiful effect. The whole of the chimneys are of red brick, moulded into a great variety of patterns, and in general design resemble those at Eton College, and Hampton Court Palace. In the gable, just described, the letters P. H., and the date 1843, may be discerned; they are formed in dark bricks.* The whole base of the building is of stone, of which material are the walls of the esplanade on the east side, as well as the walls of the steps of ascent. At the sides, the hall consists of seven divisions or "bays" in length. Taking the side, next the Inn, the first division is occupied by the square tower, which except in the lower stage, is the same as in front. At this point, in the tower, is an entrance to the building. It is reached by granite steps from the esplanade, and from New Square, the ascent being well planned for effect. The door has a four-centred arch, with square label head, the spandrels being filled with quatrefoil tracery. In the jambs are small shafts. Immediately above the door, in a square panel, is a shield, bearing the arms of the Inn, and above that the clock. This is one of the most beautiful objects in the building, and is perfectly novel in design. It is surmounted by a pedimental projecting canopy, in metal work crocketted, and containing tracery executed with great delicacy, and having the true metallic character. Indeed, throughout the building, the metal work must be considered a great step in advance in the treatment of the material. The fingers and figures of the clock, without being less easy to read, are also converted into beautiful objects. The remaining six bays are occupied by the windows of the hall and offices in the basement, the last bay—on each side—projecting as an oriel. The lower range of windows are of two lights, and square headed; the upper base moulding going round them as a label.

At a considerable height above are the windows of the hall; the bays being divided from each other by the buttresses, which project in three stages. The hall windows are square-headed of four lights, with each light arched, without cusps, and transomed. They are close under the cornice, which has a row of grotesque and foliated bosses. Above this is the parapet and battlements, with the coping running horizontal and perpendicular. The buttresses are surmounted by octagonal pinnacles, with ogee caps. The oriel, which occupies the last bay on each side of the building, is square in the plan, with angular buttresses. It has a lofty five-light window in the front, divided by transoms, and a similar window of one light, on the return. The roof is leaded, with rolls at intervals. The north gable of the building is finished with a large stack of chimneys, which are well grouped, and highly ornamental. In the angles of the flanks, with the square towers, are staircases, and the stacks of chimneys before mentioned. In the centre of the roof is an elegant louvre. It is of wood, in three stages, with two heights of small windows, which are square-headed, cusped, mullioned, and transomed, and is surrounded by slender pinnacles, bearing vanes, attached by flying buttresses. The capping is ogee-headed, with crockets and gurgoyles, and is surmounted by an elegant vane, with direction points in gilded metal work: the whole of this part of the design displays very great taste.

The central building, which forms the entrance corridor to the library and great hall, is much lower than the two other buildings. On each side is a projection, with angular buttresses, from which again projects a square oriel of six lights, transomed. From the different angles project gurgoyles. The whole is surmounted, in the centre of the plan, by an octagonal embattled crown, each side having a window with pointed arch and rich tracery. The angles are strengthened by buttresses. The effect would have been improved if this crown had been raised higher; at present the windows can hardly be perceived. On the east side, that next the inn, is the main carriage

* There can be no reason why the architect's name should not be inscribed on every building in some unobtrusive position; just as the sculptor places his name on a statue; unless architects are ashamed of what they execute. It would be looked upon as an interesting, and valuable record.

To learn about OCR and PDF Compression visit our website